Published course description: The course will explore the philosophy of Adam Smith and developments of its key facets, including liberty, justice, knowledge, and economic well-being. Much of the reading will be Smith himself, but readings will also treat of developments of Smithian ideas and themes. This part of the Smithian Political Economy sequence will give considerable attention to The Theory of Moral Sentiments, as it provides the ethical framework of Smith’s major work on commerce, industry and public policy, The Wealth of Nations.

(Smithian Political Economy II is projected for Spring 2011, and an Smithian field exam Aug 2011; link to sample exam questions.)

The class format will be lecture and discussion, based on pre-assigned readings.

Composition of Course Grade:

1. Attendance: 7% of grade.
2. Reading Discussion Leadership: 6%
3. Other (General) Class Participation: 8% of grade.
4. Weekly Point-Question Written Assignments on the Readings: each assignment should be a minimum of 1, maximum of 2 pages; 20% of grade.
5. Authorship of two comments at Journaltalk: 6%
6. McCloskey Assignment: 5% of grade.
7. Term paper: 24% of grade.
8. Final Exam: 24% of grade.

Required Readings:

- Adam Smith WN, TMS. Perhaps also Corr., EPS, LRBL, LJ.
- McCloskey, Economical Writing

Explanation of Term Papers:

Students will be required to do a major research project resulting in a paper. That paper is due the day of the final exam.

Other Responsibilities:

The Weekly Writing Assignments will be on two or three of the readings assigned for that week’s lecture. Thus, you are expected to think critically about the readings. In class, we will devote time to general discussion, and the points you formulated in advance will help to ensure a good discussion.
Reading Discussion Leadership: Students will lead discussion on some of the assigned readings. When you lead discussion, you will present the paper in summary form, highlight its main interest for our purposes, and lead open discussion of the reading.

The Final Exam will be cumulative for all readings and class material.

Late Policy: For each weekday late I will subtract 5 percentage points from the paper score. Example: A paper on time worthy of an 80 will receive a 55 if exactly one week late. This is a heavy penalty so make every effort to get your papers in on time.

Getting Help: Four good ways to get help from me: (1) ask questions during class, (2) talk to me right after class, (3) come to my office hours, (4) e-mail me, (5) talk by phone – but I call you (email your ph number to me).

Format Guidelines for the Main Writing Assignment: Deviation from the following guidelines will result in lower scores on the assignment:
1. Papers must be typed, double-spaced, 12 point font, 1 inch margins.
2. Pages must be numbered. The number of pages begins on the page after the title page.
3. Include a title page (no numbering), with a title for your paper that states the main point or main issue of your paper. (Don’t call it: “827 Term Paper”). The title page does not count as a page toward the length requirement.
4. Don’t right justify.
5. At the end of the paper provide a list of referenced works, alphabetical by last name. A page with references does not count as a page toward the length requirement. In the paper use the citation format of the following example: . . . greater availability of heroin led to an increase in usage (Wilson 1990, 25). The number 25 means page 25.
6. Avoid “we”. You are an “I”, not a “we.”

Everyone will be expected to work from the Glasgow editions, first printed by Oxford UP and now available in cheap reprint from Liberty Fund. You are required to have their copy of this edition with them at the session.

COURSE PLAN

Explanation of page/paragraph reference: The paragraphs are numbered, so I refer to both pages and paragraphs: 326-327.16 means pages 326-327 paragraph 16. After the “decimal point” comes paragraph number(s).

1st Meeting: Unlocking Some of the Mystery of TMS: Key Passages with Key Ideas
1. Smith’s organon: Jill’s moral judgment/approval regarding the doings of Ted is to be treated as always enshrouded in a kind of sympathy with some spectator, say Joy, who
also observes and morally reacts to Ted’s doings. Joy is often an imaginary being; and she may exist in Jill’s subconscious. 163.4, 165.5, 193.12.

2. “Of Justice and Beneficence”: 78-91
4. The justice paragraphs – Or, Adam Smith’s libertarian distributive justice: 269-270.9-11 (Don’t neglect Smith’s footnote!)
5. The four sources of moral approval: 326-327.16. Here Adam Smith is criticizing Francis Hutcheson’s doctrine of a moral sense. Smith writes that in his own system the four sources of moral approval leave no place for a further moral sense. When Smith speaks of “the foregoing system,” he refers to his own system.
6. An indication that WN is an annex of TMS: 340-42.36-37.

2nd Meeting: Starting from the beginning: TMS “Advertisement” p. 3; Part I: Of the Propriety of Action Consisting of Three Sections: 9-66.

3rd Meeting: TMS Part II: Of Merit and Demerit; or of the Objects of Reward and Punishment: 67-108.


5th Meeting: TMS Parts IV: Of the Effect of Utility upon the Sentiment of Approbation, and V: Of the Influence of Custom and Fashion upon the Sentiments of Moral Approbation and Disapprobation: 179-211.

6th Meeting: Discussion of secondary literature: Students pick from Article List 1 below, and lead the discussion.

7th Meeting: TMS Part VI: Of the Character of Virtue: 212-264


9th Meeting: WN, Bk I, Chs 1-7: 8-81

10th Meeting: WN, Bk I, Chs 8-10: 82-159

11th Meeting: Discussion of secondary literature: Students pick from Article List 2 below, and lead the discussion.

12th Meeting: WN, assigned pages TBA.

13th Meeting: WN, Corr., LJ, LRBL, EPS, assigned pages TBA.

14th Meeting: WN, Corr., LJ, LRBL, EPS, assigned pages TBA.
Secondary literature:

**Article list 1: Ethics:** Students are to choose from this list and lead the discussion:


**Article list 2: Political Economy:** Students are to choose from this list and lead the discussion:


**Article list 3:** These are others we might refer to:


Klein, Daniel B. and Brandon Lucas. 2010. In a Word or Two, Placed in the Middle: The Invisible Hand in Smith’s Tomes. GMU Working Paper. [Link](#)


**Some books that we are apt to refer to:**


